



Charlotte Mason's House of Education,  
Scale How, Ambleside, UK, 2009

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as well as with ourselves. She considered that one cause of this is the hurry and excitement in which we live, and that though change of work may be rest to grown up people, it is not so to children, but is only exciting. We are too apt to give them a great variety of occupations, and not enough real honest leisure. There was a fair attendance.

LEWES.—A meeting took place on Wednesday, Dec. 5th. About 55 people were present, in spite of a terribly wet afternoon. Mr. Bicknell's address, "About Stars and the easiest way to know them," was very much enjoyed. Fourteen new members have joined the branch this season.

RICHMOND AND KEW.—An address was delivered on Nov. 26th at the High School, Richmond, to a large audience, by the Warden of the Lady Warwick Hostel, Reading, on "Agriculture as a Work for Women." An interesting account was given of their very excellent scheme, but questions elicited the fact that it is still in its infancy. Dairy work is taught without a cow! Horticulture, bee cultivation, and poultry farming on twelve acres of suburban land. The arrangements of the houses for the girls seemed very satisfactory.—A lecture to members and their children was given to about 100 young people, with their parents and teachers, on December 7th, by the Rev. Theodore Wood, on the "Wonders of Ant Life." Everyone listened enthralled to the wonderful stories of these very wonderful insects. Mr. Wood is an accomplished lecturer, and has the great power of illustrating his lectures by drawings on the blackboard. Young and old came away delighted and instructed.—On Jan. 24th we hope to hear the Hon. and Rev. Canon Lyttleton, on "Character and Surroundings."

WAKEFIELD AND DISTRICT.—Miss Ravenhill gave a most instructive and interesting lecture on Dec. 3rd, on "The A. B. C. of Child-Hygiene." There was a very fair attendance of members in spite of a wet afternoon. Miss Ravenhill gave some most practical information on the various forms of food for infants and little children, the importance of fresh air, suitable clothing and the proper amount of sleep and exercise.

WOODFORD AND WANSTEAD.—The autumn session was opened on Wednesday, Oct. 31st, by kind invitation of Mr. and Mrs. Beecham Martin, Wanstead College. Mrs. Clement Parsons gave her most interesting lecture on "Simplicity." The audience showed by their extreme attention and subsequent discussion how near the subject was to many present. The winter's work was afterwards spoken of. The Secretary announced that the nucleus of a small permanent lending library was formed. There was quite a demand for Canon Lyttleton's "Home Safeguards," etc., some copies being on sale at the close. In December, extracts from Canon Lyttleton's book, "Mothers and Sons," are to be read and discussed. The next lecture is a public one, by Mrs. Lemon, Hon. Secretary of Society for Protection of Birds.

# THE PARENTS' REVIEW

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"Education is an atmosphere, a discipline, a life."

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[FEBRUARY, 1901.

## MOTHERS AND BOYS.\*

BY THE LORD BISHOP OF STEPNEY.

MR. CHAIRMAN, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I understand that this is a gathering composed almost entirely of mothers, and I feel I am extremely bold to talk to you on the subject of how to bring up your boys. My only justification for doing so, is that I have been mixed up all my life with boys and young men, and have seen the whole question about boys, and how to bring them up, from three points of view—first from my own boyhood at home, my school days, and the time I spent at the University of Oxford; secondly, for nine years I have been living in the middle of Bethnal Green, with successive generations of old public school boys and university men whom I had to train in some sort of useful work; thirdly,—and this sends me here to-day with a great sense of responsibility, and if I say some very plain things you must not mind—the awful experience during the past three years of the knowledge of London life, and especially life in the West end of London. I am dealing at this moment with boys like your own boys and brothers who, if only they had been warned earlier in life, would have been saved from the terrible experience they are going through now.

\* Lecture delivered at 4, Grosvenor Crescent, London, S.W., Dec. 3rd, 1900.  
VOL. XII.—NO. 2. F



I have divided what I want to say to you to-day into three heads:—

- (1) Dangers which a mother may prevent.
- (2) Helps that a mother can give.
- (3) Possible mistakes in a mother's treatment of her boys.

(1) *With regard to dangers which a mother can prevent.* It is always, I think, best to go straight for the most difficult thing of all, and I will begin with moral danger. What is borne in strongly upon me in dealing with young men in London, is that all this fearful shame, penitence, remorse, and the struggle of coming back into the right path, could have been saved in nine cases out of ten by a warning from their mothers before leaving home at all. I have traced many cases back to the beginning, and I find that the sins invariably begin at school; therefore the question immediately comes—What is it that we have to be so careful and anxious about when our boys first go to school? I believe if they could only have wise treatment at that time—the boys and the teachers working together hand-in-hand—an infinitude of misery would be saved.

The moral danger to boys at school is threefold. In the first place, at the age of 13 or 14 there is making itself felt in the boy's little frame what is a perfectly innocent thing—the sexual instinct. The boy knows nothing about it, he is puzzled, alarmed, troubled, and time after time he is led to do himself what often turns out afterwards to be a lasting injury. Then, secondly, there are often older boys ready to talk about these things, to take the boy who comes straight from home into a corner, and to tell him with a great air of importance the elementary facts of life. I can remember perfectly a boy, older than myself, talking in some such way to me when we went up to cricket or football, and I was talking the other day to a man who says he remembers exactly the same thing in his time; and though, in individual cases, it may do no harm, it may harm a boy greatly if he is spoken to by a low-minded school-mate. And what has he to tell? What he tells and reveals to the little boy is something that his grandmother knew years and years ago. Every public or private schoolmaster will tell you that it is not the telling of these facts that do harm, but the person by whom they are told. Thirdly, the greatest danger of all is one

which mothers and fathers can obviate. They never seem to warn their sons at all, and frequently elder boys in a school will meddle with the little ones in a way that does them lasting harm, and the little boys, in all innocence, without in the least knowing what they are doing, get into bad ways that produce illnesses and diseases which sometimes ruin their lives for all time. Now it seems to me that mothers ought to know these facts. Fathers are singularly shy about speaking of these things at all, and if the father won't do it, the mother must. In what better atmosphere can a boy be warned, and told about the most simple facts of life, than in the atmosphere of home, by the father or mother? When a little lad is crying in his mother's room, perhaps the last day before he goes to school because he *is* going away to school, what a chance there is for you to talk to that lad, to tell him of the dangers that may come! Tell him he will have these sensations and feelings, and that he need not be frightened—and tell him how to deal with them. Tell him he will meet low-minded boys; but let him have the knowledge from your lips. Explain to him quite simply the facts of human nature; there is nothing demoralising in these facts, unless they are put in a demoralising way. Tell him at once that he may meet bad boys at school, and that if they meddle with him he must at once report it. At any rate, teach him how to take care of himself. I had a striking instance the other day of how a father's warning saved a little lad at school. He knew how to take care of himself, and wrote at once to his father. The father immediately went down to the school, and the bigger boy was almost expelled; but, like many others, it was found he had drifted into these ways without knowing how wrong they were, and on being severely reprimanded was given another chance; he made the only amends he could, by constituting himself the guardian of the little boy, seeing that he was not bullied and so on. Those two boys were saved, entirely because the father had the sense to warn his boy before he went to a public school. Remember, however good the school or the schoolmasters are, they cannot be absolutely certain what is going on at all hours of the day and night. I know that masters have a sleepless watchfulness over this, and my great point is—have your boy forewarned, do not leave him dependent on the watchfulness of the master. *bus*



Having got the most difficult thing off my mind, I will go on to the second point—*The danger of loneliness*. Every week, during the thirty-two years since I first went to school I have had a letter from my mother—yes, and answered it too. Now, if his mother is such a friend to a boy as that, is that not something to rescue him from feeling lonely? Is not that weekly letter, in which he keeps no secrets from his mother, a wonderful preservation from harm? The boy has always the sense of his mother's love, the sense that he must not let her be ashamed of him, and on your side, never letting your boy miss the weekly letter, gives him a sense of a perfectly faithful friendship. One sees beautiful friendships between husbands and wives, but the friendship between a mother and her boy at school is one of the most delightful things, and if the mother is really her boy's friend I am perfectly sure he will not go very far wrong.

Then we come to the third danger—*Gambling*. Of course, a great many young men have been ruined by gambling and card playing, and I believe one of the ways to prevent a boy having a thirst for cards is *not* to make a rule that he shall never play cards, for if that rule is made, he takes a morbid delight in them when he goes to the University, and is free from home rules. Playing cards early has exactly the same effect as being allowed too many sweets. A boy who has had too many sweets always loathes them before he gets very far on in life. Another thing regarding gambling—mothers cannot be too strict with boys about their pocket-money. If they borrow even a penny or sixpence, they should be made to repay it at the point of the bayonet, and it should be instilled into a boy, as a point of honour, that a gentleman must return anything he borrows. Sometimes in dealing with a young man whom I am trying to bring back to the right way, he says to me—"I'm awful about money, I always have been!" That has happened when a boy has been allowed to suppose that it really did not very much matter; he belonged to rich people, and the amount was nothing. But my point is, that to lay a great stress on and make a great point of honour about money during boyhood, is one of the strongest preservatives against gambling and throwing money about in after life.

The fourth danger is *softness*. That varies in many homes and, of course, that particular danger is far greater in the

West end of London than in the East end. But do not fall into the danger of softness for your boys. However comfortable a home is, get your boy up every morning punctually; half the evils I have mentioned arise from self-indulgence in the morning. Let the boy lie hard; of course he must have a sufficiently comfortable bed to let him sleep, but train him, in some little way, to the hardness which our boys have to bear, whether they like it or not, in East London. Personally I am a great believer in out-door games; I believe that half these wretched sins and tendencies come among the idle and those who do not play out-door games; I entirely agree with compulsory games, unless a boy is really delicate, then of course he must be let off—and is. Have the danger of softness before you.

The fifth danger is *selfishness*. The way some boys are allowed to loll about the drawing-rooms, and are not made to get up and be polite to their mothers and sisters is appalling. We are all naturally very selfish, but make your boys run about for other people, and look after their mothers and sisters. The kindness of some people does more harm to character than the unkindness of others, and the kindness of mothers sometimes does more harm to boys than apparent unkindness. Do not let your boy be selfish.

My second heading was—*The helps that a mother can give her boy*.

First—teach them religion in a rational way. Not only, I am sorry to say, have I a great deal to do with those who have gone wrong morally and are trying to get back into the right path, but I have a great deal to do with those in a state of scepticism. A boy may be saved from scepticism and may get great help from his mother—help that will prevent his losing his faith when he first goes out into the world—if he is taught religion in a rational way. It is a great trial for a boy's faith when he first goes to the University, and suddenly has to read philosophy and to argue points he has never thought out deeply before. If he has not been warned, or taught anything about the Old Testament from a rational point of view, he is at the mercy of anybody who tries to dissipate his faith. A short time ago a young man said to me—"One of my chums at the University is a Jew, and I don't know how to answer his arguments!" In teaching



your children religion, I do think you might suggest—what such a book as *The Speaker's Commentary* would tell you—that, for instance, Balaam was probably an augur—a regular trade in those days—and sought a sign from the ass's bray, just as any of the augurs of old times saw a sign in the flight of birds, or the sound of the geese in the Capitol at Rome. A boy is told that the sun stood still, and when he reads a little science, he sees the difficulty of believing it. If you consult any commentator about the Old Testament—Geikie's *Hours with the Bible*, for instance, which, though hardly up to date, gives all necessary information—you find that Joshua, pursuing his enemies, suddenly became very much alarmed lest the great storm sweeping up the valley should bring the day to a premature close. He said, "Sun, be thou silent upon Gibeon," which is the literal translation; his prayer really meant, "Don't let this storm sweeping up the valley come to end the daylight, before I have overtaken these enemies of God and man." When the storm passed away, and the sun shone out, his prayer was answered. Tell your boy, too, that he need not believe that nearly 50,000 people were destroyed in Bethshemesh, which could not contain more than a few hundred people to begin with. The reason some of the numbers in the Old Testament are so remarkable is that in old MSS.—where each little point meant 1,000—the little points were easily rubbed off, and in time the numbers have got hopelessly wrong. But don't let your boy go to school under the impression that all his faith is gone, and that he must throw over his religion when he discovers such things as these. Mothers, by taking a little trouble when teaching their boys religion originally, might certainly save them from this.

Secondly, a mother can further help her boy by supplying the ideal of what a woman should be. You do not realise, I am sure, what boys feel with regard to their mothers. If once you let a boy lose faith in his mother, you have broken the thing that will best keep him straight all through his life. He never criticises his mother, but takes all she is to him for granted, and thinks her a perfect model of all the virtues. This feeling ought to make every mother take care that she never does anything that could possibly be spoken evil of. If this happens, the boy's best safeguard has been taken away. Supply to your boys yourself an ideal of what a woman should be.

Thirdly, you can help a boy as to what he shall be in life. A mother really has more responsibility than anybody else as to the vocation and future of her boy. When a boy is quite small he suggests that he shall be a policeman, or a railway guard, or a keeper; but when he has got through these things it falls to the parents to help him with the real choice. You must make him think. I should like to say something about the question of taking orders. It is a most scandalous thing that now there are hundreds of curacies vacant in England because there is nobody to take them. The number of University men taking orders is daily becoming smaller, and the number has to be made up with clerks from the city—young men who have not been to the University, who have saved up a little money to help them through their examinations, or to go perhaps to King's College. They are excellent fellows in their way, but I say it is a bad thing for the Church of England if the regular supply is going to fall short—if our clergy, for the future, are to be drawn solely from young clerks in the city, with just a smattering of the needful knowledge. It largely depends on you. We all know how, if a boy says he is going to take orders, sometimes a smile goes through the house:—"Jack's going to be a parson, do you hear that?" This should not be the case. The boy is laughed at, and perhaps gets put off what has been his original bent. I call it crushing the vocation of God, and those who do it will have to answer before God for it. The inspiration of the Holy Spirit in that boy's heart is the inspiration of God the Holy Ghost, and if you foster it, and take care of it, you may have the inestimable happiness of being the mother of some excellent Priest of God, who may do you credit in years to come. At any rate, I think you Christian mothers should wish to dedicate at least one of your boys to God and His Church, and though it is perfectly true that he will probably be a poor man all his life, he won't be any the less happy for that. It will be a fatal thing for the country and the Church unless we get a supply of young men from the Universities. In preaching the other evening to a congregation of undergraduates about it, I reminded them that the objective call is often not heard. Men say, "We have not a call!" But heaven and earth is ringing with it! People forget the objective call and need. Volunteers flocked to South Africa.



Why? Because it was the need called them. I want people to recognize the call of the Church to-day in the great need for men.

Fourthly, do not so press religion as to put a boy off. Religion should lie very lightly on the soil. Do not make Sunday a dreary day to him; let him enjoy Sunday. Let the whole thing lie lightly upon him that he may not feel religion and Sunday dull and monotonous.

Fifthly, be a confidant in your boy's troubles. There is no one he ought to go to before his mother—until he gets his wife—and then he should feel that his mother sets the ideal of what his wife ought to be.

My third head is, *Possible mistakes in dealing with boys.*

First, fussing over them too much. If once you fuss over your boy, he begins to think himself of too much importance; to think what a wonderful person he is; what wonderful things he will do. It is a mistake to repeat his wonderful sayings at the age of seven over the tea table when he is present. The boy who is fussed over often ends by becoming a little prig.

Secondly, never suspect him. The great thing is to be always perfectly certain he is telling the truth; if once you say to a boy, "Now are you sure this is true—are you sure you are telling me the truth?"—that is the first step towards making him a liar. It is a fatal mistake not to trust your boys.

Thirdly, the mistake of expecting too much religious feeling in boys when young. I know a boy who was always so full of what he was going to do when he grew up; how he was going to the mission field and so on. The moment he left school, instead of doing mission work, or anything like it, he went on rather a low stage. I rather expected it. I distrust too much talk about their religious feelings among school boys.

Fourthly, don't spoil your boys' tempers. An old Rugby master tells a story of a boy writing home to his father complaining of the master. The father sent the letter back to head-quarters forgetting to tear off the fly-sheet, on which the boy had written a postscript—"He's a beast, but he's a just beast." The master considered that one of the greatest compliments he had ever received. Boys appreciate justice more than anything else. Never be unjust when boys do

what is wrong. The most popular masters in public schools are the strict masters who are just.

Fifthly, don't make the mistake of comparing one boy to another—"Look at so-and-so, how nicely he does it." I have a recollection of that myself, I used to be held up as a model to another boy. There is only one answer to that, and it was given in *Punch*. A neighbour's son was held up as a model to a boy: the delinquent turned to his father and retorted, "Yes, but then he has such clever parents!" That was a fair score.

I want to say a few more words about boys when they become undergraduates, and when they go out into the world.

First about undergraduates. Take an interest in them. Let your boy at Oxford or Cambridge feel you are interested in what he is doing, in what he is learning. Read up a bit, and let him feel you are a companion to him; it is such a mistake to let him get into the way of thinking "Mother won't understand this." I think it would be a very good thing for mothers to do a little reading quietly, so that when their boy comes back from the University he may find them interested in some new book that has given him pleasure. The mothers who have most influence with boys do that.

Then, do have an adequate sense of proportion. The other day a lad got into a scrape and his people came to me about it in a terrible state of mind. I implored them not to take any notice of it, and, as a matter of fact, the whole thing passed over. Keep a sense of proportion, don't put down as moral failings what are really only animal spirits, and above all do keep a sense of humour.

What can you do for your boys when they go out into the world? Let your lad feel that you expect him to be a gentleman to every woman he meets; therefore, to be consistent, I do strongly think that you must not have in your drawing-room men whom you know to be living bad lives. A little healthy courage of this kind safeguards not only your boys, but your girls too. I cannot think how pure mothers can allow with their girls, men whom they ought to be ashamed to have in the same house. Never let your boy cease to feel in after life that his mother has looked after him and taken care of him.

Lastly, when your boy is married, do not be jealous of his wife—if you can help it.



I have put together what I have said to you very roughly, but I have taken it from what I have myself seen—from life as I see it every day. If you pray about your boys, and follow that up with love—love—love—wise love—all your days, then you will have the inestimable happiness in another world, of not only being there yourself, but of meeting your children there too.

The Chairman (— BIDDLE, ESQ.): Before I ask you to give a very hearty vote of thanks to the Bishop of Stepney for his eloquent address, I should like to say a few words and, if possible, make two or three suggestions. The tendency nowadays is to imagine that every new idea in education must necessarily be good because it is new. I would like people, before they try new experiments, to be quite sure that they have got all the good they can out of the old methods. No doubt the old systems can be improved upon—they are being improved upon every day—but I would like people to think that some regard must be had for the tried system. With regard to home influences, the Bishop has told us a great deal; but there are one or two definite and practical points which come under our notice every day. Most of the failings I have noticed in small boys come straight from the nurseries. As far as I can trace back, it is because when the boys were little things, the mothers had found it so dreadfully hard to say *no* gently and firmly. I am told boys we find no trouble with are troublesome at home. That is because they have not been taught to understand at home that “No” means “No.” Had they been made to understand this, many troubles would never come.

We are now approaching Christmas and I should like to say one word on the subject of holidays. I think it is wrong for a child to come back to school, and feel that he has not had proper Christmas holidays in London unless he has been incessantly to parties and theatres. I feel sure that many of those evils that appear a little later than the time I deal with in the boys, arise from going with their elders to theatres they would be much better away from. Nothing will induce me to believe that a regular system of gaieties—do not think for a moment that I wish to prohibit parties altogether—is not bad for boys in mind, body and character. The excitement is too great for them, and when they come back to work at the end of a holiday spent in that way, it takes them at least

three weeks to settle down, and their minds are dull. I would like mothers to think about this, to say *no* sometimes, and to mean it, when they think their children have had enough gaiety. Another point I should like to notice is a growing lack of courtesy amongst boys. My father always impressed upon his sons that courtesy could never be shown better than in addressing servants. Small boys sometimes come to my house and speak to my servants in an outrageous fashion; I am quite sure some attention ought to be paid to it. Lastly, I would like to urge and back up what has been said about out-door games to the utmost of my power. I would urge all mothers never to say to a schoolmaster, as is so often said to me—“I hate football, it is a horrible game!” The Bishop of Stepney has referred to one phase of games—to make the boys healthy and strong, and to work off their animal spirits. That is excellent; but there is another point. Playing at games, when you share the work and struggle for the mastery, when the joy of triumph and the self-restraining influence of defeat is shared with other members of your side, is as healthy a training for character, mind and body, as a boy can have. It is not merely the playing the game by yourself, it is the playing a game with others, where you are only part of a side, and have to do the best for your party as well as for yourself, and where you share the joy of triumph and the sorrow of defeat.

Questions were asked by several members of the audience: among others, regarding the keeping of Sunday and Sunday games; the giving of pocket money; whether a boy's little debts should be paid if he over-spent his allowance; whether wine should be prohibited altogether, or treated as cards as not absolutely forbidden; whether a form of prayer should be supplied for a boy's guidance?

THE BISHOP OF STEPNEY in reply said: As to the keeping of Sunday. That is one of the most difficult questions that can be asked. I should feel inclined to say that a little boy ought to be taught to go to church with his mother. When boys get a little older, and if they seem to hate going, I should not force them into it, but try to make them feel it a privilege. As I have said before, I think it a great mistake to thrust religion down a boy's throat, and I always feel it rather a triumph for the policy of not doing



so, that in one family I know well, where there were seven boys, three of them are clergymen and the other four are more religious than the three who are ordained. With regard to Sunday games: it depends on what they are. Charles Kingsley would never allow his boys to play cricket on the village green on Sunday, because he said they could play during the week. I should be much more liberal-minded to boys in the East End than to West End boys. I often tell them there is no harm in their going out for walks or bicycle rides on Sunday afternoons, if they have attended to their religious duties in the morning—for that is the only time they can get fresh air; objecting to that seems to me to be making into a sin what is in reality no sin. This is the principle: you must work out your own details on the Sunday question.

About pocket money: by all means let your boys have some; and let it be in proportion to what he will have to spend in after life. *But*—make him keep an account book. As to whether a boy's debts should be paid when he spends more pocket money than he has got—of course circumstances differ; but if a boy's debts are paid, see that he pays you back the money out of his weekly allowance. A father said to me the other day—"When my boys get into debt, I make it as uncomfortable for them as possible!" That is an excellent rule.

I do not at all take the view that wine should be treated in the same way as playing cards and not prohibited. The more wine is kept away from young boys the better. It does them nothing but harm, unless they are really very delicate. Naturally I see the difficulty that when they get to the University they may take too much; but I do not think you will save them from that by letting them have it as boys. In this connection may I say that letting boys play cards for money is a fatal mistake. It is playing with fire.

I think a form of prayer *should* be given to boys at first, because they do not know what to say. *The Daily Round*, price about 3s. or 4s., is an excellent book of devotion, and let your boy have a prayer card.

THE CHAIRMAN proposed a hearty vote of thanks to the Bishop of Stepney for his lecture, and the proceedings terminated.

## FELIX MENDELSSOHN-BARTHOLDY.

BY MRS. MAXWELL Y. MAXWELL.

(Continued from page 14.)

It has been said that the music of Mendelssohn is to the music of Wagner as the Grecian architecture is to the Gothic. But however justifiable the simile may be, one can hardly feel that the music of Mendelssohn is quite as limited as the flatness of the Classic roof over one's head: and it might surely be accorded the distance and, perhaps, even some of the mystery of the Gothic roof. Though if we agree to accord this to Mendelssohn, we must—to be relatively fair where Wagner is concerned—take off the roof entirely and stand beneath the infinitude of the sky.

Wagner published a bitter attack upon what he called the "Deleterious effect of the Jews upon music," meaning, we understand, the limitations of Mendelssohn and Meyerbeer. Now respecting Mendelssohn's limitations, it must be remembered that they are to be found in method and form only, while the matter is unlimited, free, and original. His knowledge of counterpoint was quite as great as Wagner's, he could therefore have broken its laws with equal intelligence and daring to suit his own purposes, for assuredly Wagner was not made for counterpoint, but counterpoint for Wagner. But the reason that Mendelssohn confined his musical ideas within recognized modes of expression was because it was his wish to do so, not because he was limited or common-place, but because he had a reverence for musical law. He avows this principle quite clearly enough; but if he had not done so in words his life and character would have spoken it, for his morals as well as his music were kept under control. As a young man he was bursting with spontaneous exuberance, he was sensitive, fascinating, and universally beloved, with a keen capacity for enjoyment such as only the artistic nature possesses. But he held every faculty within the bounds of righteousness.